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Ne cures ea quæ ſtulté miraris & optas,
Diſcere & audire & meliori credere non vis. HOR.

IT is an obſervation of the duke de Rochefaucault, that there are many people in the world who would never have been in love, if they had never heard talk of it. As ſtrange as this aſſertion may appear, there is nothing more certain than that mankind purſue with much greater ardor what they are talked into an admiration of, than what they are prompted to by their natural paſſions: nay, ſo great is the infatuation, that we frequently ſee them relinquiſhing real gratifications, for the ſake of following ideal notions, or the accidental mode of thinking of the preſent times.

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THE ſtory of the princeſs Parizade in the Arabian tales, is a proper illuſtration of what I have here advanced. I ſhall give my readers a ſhort abſtract of this ſtory, as it may furniſh matter for reflection, and a very uſeful moral, to ſuch of them as regulate their whole conduct, and even their deſires by FASHION.

THIS princeſs, the happieſt as well as moſt beautiful of her ſex, lived with her two beloved brothers in a ſplendid palace, ſituated in the midſt of a delightful park, and the moſt exquiſite gardens of the eaſt. It happened one day, while the princes were hunting, that an old woman came to the gate, and deſired admittance to the oratory that ſhe might ſay her prayers. The princeſs no ſooner knew of her requeſt than ſhe granted it, giving orders to her attendants, that after the good woman's prayers were ended, they ſhould ſhew her all the apartments of the palace, and then bring her into the hall where ſhe herſelf was ſitting. Every thing was performed as directed; and the princeſs, having regaled her gueſt with ſome fruits and ſweetmeats, among many other queſtions, aſked her what ſhe thought of the palace.

"MADAM," anſwered the old woman, "your pa-
"lace is beautiful, regular, and magnificently furniſh-
"ed; it's ſituation is delightful, and it's gardens are
"beyond compare. But yet, if you will give me leave
"to ſpeak freely, there are three things wanting to
"make it perfect"——"My good mother," interrupted the princeſs Parizade, "what are thoſe three
"things? I conjure you in God's name to tell me what
"they are; and if there be a poſſibility of obtaining
"them, neither difficulties nor dangers ſhall ſtop me
"in the attempt." "Madam," replied the old woman, "the firſt of theſe three things is the Talking
"Bird,

" Bird, the ſecond is the Singing Tree, and the third " is the Yellow or Golden Water." " Ah, my good " mother," cried the princeſs, " how much am I ob- " liged to you for the knowledge of theſe things! They " are no doubt the greateſt curioſities in the world; " and unleſs you can tell me where they are to be " found, I am the moſt unhappy of women." The old woman ſatisfied the princeſs in that material point, and then took her leave.

The ſtory goes on to inform us, that when the two princes returned from hunting, they found the princeſs Parizade ſo wrapt up in thought, that they imagined ſome great misfortune had befallen her, which when they conjured her to acquaint them with, ſhe only lifted up her eyes to look upon them, and then fixed them again upon the ground, telling them nothing diſturbed her. The entreaties of the two princes, however, at laſt prevailed, and the princeſs addreſſed them in the following manner.

" You have often told me, my dear brothers, and I " have always believed, that this houſe, which our fa- " ther built, was complete in every thing; but I have " learnt this day that it wants three things; theſe are " the Talking Bird, the Singing Tree, and the Yellow " Water. An old woman has made this diſcovery to " me, and told me the place where they are to be " found, and the way thither. Perhaps you may look " upon theſe rarities as trifles; but think what you " pleaſe, I am fully perſuaded that they are abſolutely " neceſſary; and whether you value them or not, I " cannot be eaſy without them."

THE ſequel tells us, that after the princeſs Parizade had expreſſed herſelf with this proper ſpirit upon the occaſion, the brothers, in pity to her wants, went in purſuit of theſe NECESSARIES, and that failing in the enterpriſe, they were one after another turned into ſtone.

THE application of this tale is ſo univerſal, that the enumerating particulars is almoſt an unneceſſary labour. The whole faſhionable world are ſo many Parizades; and things not only uſeleſs in their natures, but alſo ugly in themſelves, from having been once termed CHARMING by ſome faſhionable leaders of modern taſte, are now become ſo NECESSARY that *nobody can do without them.*

BUT though this ſtory happens to be told of a lady, the folly it particularizes is chiefly to be found in the other ſex: I mean, in reſpect to the pernicious conſequences attending vain and chimerical purſuits.

IF we enter into the ſtricteſt examination of theſe dle longings in the women, we ſhall find that they ſeldom amount to any thing more than a diſſipation of their pin-money, without any other ill conſequence than that of turning their thoughts from ſome real good, which they actually poſſeſs, to an imaginary expectation. The paſſion for ſhells, old china and the like, is confeſſedly trifling; but it is only blameable in proportion to the anxiety with which it is purſued: but what is this in compariſon of the deſolation of ambition, the waſte of magnificence, and the ruin of play?

MADAME Monteſpan's coach and ſix mice was not a more idle, though it was a leſs miſchievous folly, than the armies of her lover, Lewis the fourteenth. The ambition of that monarch to emulate the conquerors of antiquity;

antiquity; of Cæſar to rival Alexander; of Alexander to reſemble the hero of his darling poem, the Iliad; the deſigns of Pyrrhus, and the projects of Xerxes; what were they but counterparts to a paſſion for the Talking Bird, the Singing Tree, and the Yellow Water?

To deſcend a little into private life, how many do we ſee daily talked into a rage for building, gardening, painting, and divers other expences, to the embarraſſing a fortune which would more than ſufficiently ſupply the neceſſaries of life? Among the numbers who have changed a ſober plan of living for one of riot and exceſs, the greateſt part have been converted by the arguments in a drinking ſong. Thouſands have taken the ſame fruitleſs and expenſive journey, becauſe they have heard that it is very JOHN TROTT not to have viſited France, and that a perſon who has not been abroad has SEEN NOTHING. I was once told by a gentleman, who had undone himſelf by keeping running horſes, that he owed his ruin to a ſtrong impreſſion made upon him, when a boy, by his father's butler, who happened to declare in his hearing, "that it was a creditable thing to "keep good cattle; and that if he was a gentleman, "he ſhould take great pleaſure in being always well "mounted."

BUT to apply our fable to the moſt recent inſtance of this ſpecies of infatuation, how often have we ſeen an honeſt country gentleman, who has lived a truly happy life, bleſſed in his family, amuſed with his farms and gardens, entertained by his own beneficence, uſefully employed in the adminiſtration of juſtice, or in reconciling the differences of his litigious neighbours; but who being talked into an opinion of the great ſervice a man might do his country, as well as honour to himſelf

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